

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims, in view of the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

In the pending Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 13 and 28, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Flom '349 (U.S. Patent No. 4,641,349); and objected to claims 18-23 as containing a minor informality.

The Examiner also indicated that claims 2-12, 14-15, 17, 24-27, and 29-30 are allowed.

Prior to this Amendment, claims 2-15 and 17-30 were pending of which claims 2-3, 9, 12-13, 17-18, 24, and 27-29 were independent. By this Amendment, Applicants have cancelled rejected claims 13 and 28, thereby rendering the § 103(a) rejections of these claims moot. Applicants have also amended claim 18 to correct the informality indicated by the Examiner. As such, claims 2-12, 14-15, and 17, 19-27, and 29-30 are presented for examination of which claims 2-3, 9, 12, 17-18, 24, 27, and 29 are independent. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the § 103(a) rejections of claims 13 and 28 and the withdrawal of the objection to claim 18.

Applicants submit that entry of this Amendment is appropriate under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, as the Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) does not raise any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search; and (c) does not add any claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims. The Amendment is necessary and was not presented earlier as it is in response to arguments raised in the pending Final Office Action. Entry of this Amendment is, thus, respectfully submitted.

All matters having been addressed, Applicant respectfully requests the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the immediate issuance of the pending claims.

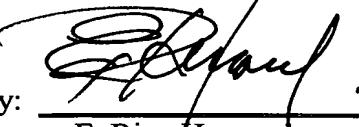
Applicants' Counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter.

**OKAZAKI et al. U.S. Appln. Ser. No. 09/808,939**

Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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